



PUIJO

City of Kuopio

"One cannot fully appreciate Kuopio's beauty, before one has risen to the top of that prominent ridge, Puijo hill, of which the discomfort of climbing is rewarded with a wonderful view of Lake Kallavesi's clear waters and their hundreds of islands, cliffs, sounds, grassy shores, and steam ships smoking and sails shining from far away."

Z. Topelius 1873

Ancient rock

The Puijo ridge has been formed from some of earth's oldest rock types, varying from 2 500 million years to 1 870 million years in age. The hills in the area are the remnants of the summits of more durable formations, such as Puijo hill that rises 232 metres above sea level and 150 metres above the surface of Lake Kallavesi. Mementos of the last ice sheet are found from Puijo ridge, such as the old shore of the Yoldia sea that covered the area about 10 000 years ago.



Bountiful herb-rich forests

Kuopio is located in a district rich in herb-rich forests which is the Finnish Lake Region's most important area for vegetation demanding a rich soil. Over 350 vascular plant types, including several rare and endangered species, have been found on Puijo ridge. These rarities include, among others, wall lettuce (*Mycelis muralis*), galde fern (*Diplazium sibiricum*) and drooping wood-reed (*Cinna latifolia*). Puijo ridge is also the most important habitat in the EU for an endangered moss species, Drummond's plagiomnium moss (*Plagiomnium drummondii*). The old forests of Puijo are the home of many rare and threatened polypores (e.g. *Gelatoporia pannocincta*, *Antrodia mellita* and *Amyloporia sitchensis*).

Puijo's bird population is also diverse and abundant. Rare birds, including species typical of old forests, are often seen on Puijo and in the surrounding area. Puijo's bird population includes, among others, the greenish warbler, red-breasted flycatcher and three-toed woodpecker.

Valuable conservation areas

Nature conservation has a long tradition in Puijo. The first, 63 hectares conservation area in Puijo, was established as early as 1928. It was one of the first nature conservation areas established in Finland.

The size of the Puijo nature conservation area is currently approximately 212 hectares. The majority of this area is also a part of the EU's Natura network. The most valuable parts of Puijo ridge, such as the herb-rich forests of Satulanotko and Antikkalanrinne, belong to the nature conservation area. The old spruce forests located in the Kokonmäki hill, in Satulanotko and in the old conservation area in the southern part of the area, increase the protection value of the Puijo area further.





The first observation tower was built on Puijo in the mid-1850s. This 16 metres high wooden tower was replaced some fifty years later by a 24 metres high round red brick tower. In turn, it made way for the present 75 metres high tower at the beginning of the 1960s.

Landscape and tourism

Puijo hill is especially well known for its beautiful views, which are considered to represent the national ideal of Finnish scenery. This ideal, with its lakes, islands and forests, has inspired many writers, composers and other prominent figures in Finnish culture.

The first restaurant on Puijo was already open at the end of the 19th century. The first accommodation, which was a small lodge called Puijon Pirtti, was built in 1907. Today, Puijo tower is visited annually by over 80 000 domestic and foreign tourists.

Sport and recreation

Puijo ridge is one of the most popular recreation areas in Kuopio, with its numerous paths and extensive track network. Three nature trails offer a chance to experience the area's diversity. Puijo is especially well known as a place for winter sports.

There is tobogganing, cross-country and downhill skiing, and ski-jumping, which have been practised on Puijo since the beginning of the 20th century. The traditional Puijo Winter Games date back to the 1930s. The ski-jumps and other sports venues can be found in the sports area in the south-western part of Puijo ridge.



The most well-known of Puijo's services is probably the observation tower, from where one can admire the beautiful scenery of the Kallavesi archipelago. In the old Konttila croft located about one kilometre from the Puijo Tower, there is a café and an exhibition displaying nature themes.

Getting about

You can move freely on most of Puijo ridge. Picking berries and mushrooms is also allowed. Movement is restricted to the paths in the nature conservation area and in the herb-rich areas that are less resistant to use. In the nature conservation area, mountain biking is allowed on outdoor routes, roads and on marked mountain biking trail.

Outdoor routes and nature trails are shown on the map overleaf. Three signposted nature trails of some two kilometres are paint-marked in the forest.



Further information:

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